



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
**Federal Transit  
Administration**

December 29, 2010

Mr. Bharat Mathur  
Acting Regional Administrator - Region 5  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604

Re: Invitation to Participate in Environmental Review Process for the CTA North Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) Project

Dear Mr. Mathur:

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in cooperation with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), is initiating the preparation of a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed North Red and Purple Modernization (RPM) project. The proposed project would bring the existing North Red and Purple lines into a state of good repair from north of Belmont Station to the Linden terminal.

The Tier 1 EIS will allow the FTA and CTA to use the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process as a tool to involve agencies and the public in the planning decision-making process and to capture any associated or cumulative impacts. This will ensure that the complete 9.5-mile RPM corridor is analyzed appropriately and that the EIS is used to help refine and prioritize design concepts and packages of projects. After this EIS process is complete, specific project level NEPA environmental documentation will be prepared as needed. These ensuing NEPA documents can summarize information from the 1<sup>st</sup> Tier EIS and concentrate on the issues specific to the subsequent actions (40 CFR 1502.20).

The purpose of the project is to reduce travel times, improve access to job markets, respond to shifts in travel demand, better utilize existing transit infrastructure and provide access to persons with disabilities in the north lakefront and north suburban areas of Chicago. This project will also support the area's economic development initiatives and transit supportive development patterns. The enclosed scoping information packet provides more details including a preliminary project schedule.

A vision study was conducted for this project to gather early input and help formulate potential alternatives. Information about the vision study process may be found at [http://www.transitchicago.com/news\\_initiatives/planning/redpurplevision.aspx](http://www.transitchicago.com/news_initiatives/planning/redpurplevision.aspx). Input from the public and agencies during the vision study process helped shape the alternatives that will be the subjects of the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

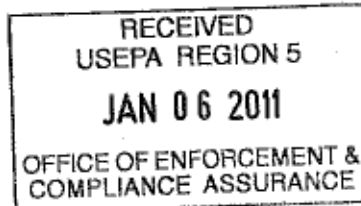
**Enclosure 3**

*Norm - Prepare response*

*NEPA - Waits  
- West Lake*

REGION V  
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Michigan, Minnesota,  
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RECEIVED

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
OFFICE OF REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) establishes an enhanced environmental review process for certain FTA planning activities, including those of the RPM project. SAFETEA-LU requires improved transparency and opportunities for participation. As part of the environmental review process for this project, the lead agencies must identify, as early as practicable, any other Federal and non-Federal agencies that may have an interest in the project, and invite such agencies to become participating agencies in the environmental review process.<sup>1</sup>

Your agency has been identified as one that may have an interest in this project due to the volume of passengers and importance of the transit lines to the surrounding residential communities, businesses, educational facilities, parks and natural areas. In addition, your agency may also have an interest due to the potential for impacts to the physical and human environment from construction and operation of the project. Accordingly, you are being extended this invitation to become actively involved as a participating agency in the environmental review process for the project.

As a participating agency, you will be afforded the opportunity, together with the public, to be involved in determining the range of alternatives to be considered for the project. These efforts will build on the early participation opportunities that were provided during the vision study process. In addition, you will be asked to:

- Provide input on the impact assessment methodologies in relation to your agency's area of expertise;
- Participate in coordination meetings, conference calls, and joint field reviews, as appropriate; and
- Review and comment on sections of draft environmental documents to communicate any concerns of your agency on the adequacy of the document, the alternatives considered, and the anticipated impacts and mitigation.

Your agency does not have to accept this invitation. If, however, you elect not to become a participating agency, you must decline this invitation in writing, indicating that your agency has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project, no expertise or information relevant to the project, and does not intend to submit comments on the project. The declination may be transmitted electronically to Mr. Reginald Arkell of our Region V Office at [reginald.arkell@dot.gov](mailto:reginald.arkell@dot.gov). Please include the title of the official responding. In order to give your agency adequate opportunity to weigh the relevance of your participation in this environmental review process, written response to this invitation is not due until after the agency scoping. The interagency scoping meeting will be held as follows:

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<sup>1</sup>Designation as a "participating agency" does not imply that the participating agency supports the proposed project or has any jurisdiction over, or special expertise concerning the proposed project or its potential impacts. A "participating agency" differs from a "cooperating agency," which is defined in regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act as "any Federal agency other than a lead agency which has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposal (or a reasonable alternative) for legislation or other major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.5.


- Monday, January 24 at 10:30 a.m. at CTA Headquarters, in the Conference Room 2A, 567 W. Lake Street, Chicago, IL 60661.

You or your delegate is invited to represent your agency at this meeting. Please note that building security requires meeting attendees to RSVP in advance. Your agency will be treated as a participating agency unless your written response declining such designation as outlined above is transmitted to this office not later than January 31, 2011.

Enclosed is a copy of the Federal Register Notice of Intent and scoping information materials which includes a description of the project area and proposed alternatives. Additional information will be forthcoming during the scoping process. To RSVP your attendance at the interagency scoping meeting, please contact Mr. Steve Hands, Strategic Planning and Policy, Chicago Transit Authority, PO Box 7602, Chicago, IL 60680-7602, via email at [shands@transitchicago.com](mailto:shands@transitchicago.com), or phone at (312) 681-4169.

If you have questions regarding this invitation please contact Mr. Reginald Arkell, Community Planner, at 312-886-3704 or via email at [Reginald.Arkell@dot.gov](mailto:Reginald.Arkell@dot.gov).

Sincerely,

  
for Marisol R. Simon  
Regional Administrator

Enclosures (2):

1. Scoping Information Packet/Schedule
2. Federal Register NOI

cc: Steve Hands, Chicago Transit Authority